

PROPOSED PROGRAM SUMMARY

Institution: Morehead State University
Program Name: Social Work
Degree Destination: Master of Social Work

CIP Code: 44.0701

Credit Hours: 30

Implementation Date: 6/1/2025

Program Description

The new program will increase the number of critically needed social work professionals, targeting issues related to behavioral health and substance use. Master's level social workers are in high demand in Eastern Kentucky and can be immediately employed as clinicians, practitioners, program administrators, policy analysts, and researchers.

Students who have earned a bachelor's degree in social work will complete 30 hours of graduate-level work. Students with a bachelor's degree in any other discipline may also enroll but will be required to complete 60 hours of graduate-level work. Concentrations for the program will be in the fields of Clinical Social Work, Public Health, and Substance Use Disorders, although students may also select a Generalist track (no concentration).

As a result of this program, graduates will be able to:

- engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.
- identify ethical and culturally informed strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods.
- apply knowledge of human behavior and interprofessional conceptual frameworks to engage with clients and other constituencies.
- critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

A unique aspect of this program is its focus on Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorders.

Connection to Other Programs

For students from the eastern and northeastern regions of Kentucky, the nearest hybrid MSW program is at the University of Kentucky. Providing a hybrid MSW option in the eastern and northeastern regions will increase accessibility and success rates for place-based students who prefer to learn through a combination of online and face-to-face instruction.

Student Demand

Initial estimates of enrollment are:

Year 1 – 30

Year 2 – 40

Year 3 – 50

Year 4 – 55

Year 5 – 60

Employment Demand

The eastern region of Kentucky does not have enough social workers to meet demand. Healthcare providers, recovery centers, community health centers, and other agencies in the region have expressed a need for more social workers. Graduates will move directly into practice upon graduation. There are close to 1,000 job postings for MSW-prepared social workers in Kentucky, with an average salary of \$39,900. This field is expected to continue to grow.

Budget

Program funding will come from a three-year grant from the Kentucky Association of Health Plans and from graduate tuition and fees. The existing strong enrollment in the Bachelor of Social Work program ensures that the MSW program will have consistent enrollment. Faculty are working on a plan to provide a bachelor-to-master pathway that students can complete in five years (or three years for transfer students).

Projected Revenue over Next Five Years (\$):	\$ 4,060,800
Projected Expenses over Next Five Years (\$):	\$ 725,000